

HOUSE RESOLUTION 62

By Mitchell

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of John Kilzer of Memphis.

WHEREAS, this legislative body was deeply saddened to learn of the untimely passing of John Kilzer, a gifted singer and songwriter, a former Memphis State University basketball player, and a compassionate minister who specialized in recovery; and

WHEREAS, a native of Jackson, John Kilzer was an All-American high school basketball player and outstanding shooting guard who accepted a scholarship to play for Memphis State University at the collegiate level in 1975; and

WHEREAS, after playing four years with the Tigers, he taught English at Memphis State before pursuing a career in music; his decision was inspired, in part, by Mr. Kilzer's chance encounter and subsequent friendship with Mabon "Teenie" Hodges, the legendary Hi Records guitarist and songwriter; and

WHEREAS, John Kilzer's music career exploded after he released a pair of roots-rock albums, 1988's *Memory in the Making* and 1991's *Busman's Holiday*; his hit "Red Blue Jeans" from the first album gained him additional exposure on MTV and *Melrose Place*; and

WHEREAS, his songs have been recorded by such notable artists as Trace Adkins, Maria Muldaur, and Roseanne Cash; and

WHEREAS, after being blessed with sobriety and finding his faith, John Kilzer earned his Master of Divinity degree from Memphis Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. from Middlesex University; and

WHEREAS, as part of his mission, he combined music and ministry in developing "The Way," a recovery-oriented service; and

WHEREAS, after a long hiatus, he resumed his recording career in 2007 with the release of *Seven*, which was followed by two more albums; earlier this year, he released his sixth album, *Scars*; and

WHEREAS, John Kilzer was a genius at utilizing the traditional Memphis Sound as a backdrop for his poetic, expressive lyrics, causing one writer to compare his music to "William Butler Yeats meeting Booker T. Jones on a Beale Street Saturday night"; and

WHEREAS, at the time of his passing, Mr. Kilzer was serving as associate pastor of recovery ministries at St. John's United Methodist Church in Memphis, where he used music as a path to recovery via "The Way"; and

WHEREAS, John Kilzer wrote songs that explored both the joy and angst of human existence with perception and compassion, and his talents will be greatly missed; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we honor the memory of John Kilzer, reflecting fondly upon his brilliant careers as a singer-songwriter, academic, and pastor, and extend our sympathy and condolences to his many friends and fans.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.